NAQCC News

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1. MARCH CHALLENGE: We're repeating a previous March challenge that turned out to be intriguing and popular at the time it was first used. It's the Winter-Spring challenge. We challenge you to make the word WINTER from March 1 0000Z through March 20 1732Z using letters NOT from calls, but from the CITY or TOWN of the hams you work. Then from March 20 1732Z through March 31 2400Z you must make the word SPRING from the NAME of the hams you work. You can only get one letter from a ham. That is you need to make QSO's with 12 different hams to complete the challenge. Read the rules carefully on the March challenge page as there are a couple of other conditions listed there.

Full Challenge info here.

2. FEBRUARY SPRINT RESULTS: We shattered records this month in our sprint. Conditions were great, participation continues to increase as our monthly NAQCC sprints become more and more popular, and more folks who enter are reporting their results.

Use of the autologger is now just under 100% among participants. Formatting of logs continues to improve each month, but there are still some little things that slow down the processing of logs for cross-checking.

One of the things is numbering multipliers. It's very simple and if you do (or your logging program does) it like this, it is ideal and requires no extra work or time to process your log. When you work your first QSO, put a 1 in the multiplier column. If the next QSO is a new multiplier, put a 2 in the column. If it is not a new multiplier, put a hyphen (-) there. Continue on, numbering each new multiplier consecutively, and putting a hyphen if it is not a new multiplier.

We'll cover other matters of logging in upcoming sprint reports here in the newsletter.

Let's look at a couple new sprint features. Our second First-Timer certificate went to WA1BXY who had the highest score among first time member entrants. KO7X had a higher score, but he is not a member (yet?). Our drawing among participants for the bug/paddle handles/sk knobs crafted by WB8LZG was won by K3RLL (ex-WA3ZBJ).

Let's get down to results and stats now. They're impressive.

STATS - current month, previous month, all time record, mo/yr (blue indicates a record set this month):

Logs -	**76**	**72**	**76**	**2/10**
Autologger logs -	**73**	**71**	**73**	**2/10**
Stns in logs -	**127**	**117**	**127**	**2/10**
Hour 1 QSO's -	**570**	**372**	**570**	**2/10**
Hour 2 QSO's -	**590**	**220**	**590**	**2/10**
Total QSO's -	**1160**	**592**	**1160**	**2/10**
20M QSO's -	**2**	**2**	**209**	**6/09**
40M QSO's -	**393**	**484**	**720**	**5/09**
80M QSO's -	**765**	**106**	**765**	**2/10**

WINNERS:

1st SWA East - AA4W
1st SWA Central - W5YDM
1st SWA Mountain - K6XT
1st SWA Pacific - NU7T
1st Gain - n/a
First-Timer Certificate - WA1BXY
Knob/handle drawing: K3RLL

Congratulations to all including winners and non-winners. Actually everyone who participated and sent in a log is a winner because that shows the ham radio world that there are many folks still using and enjoying CW on the ham bands. That's one of our main goals here at the NAQCC.

Very special thanks to those who reported their results even though they made only a few QSO's. Your reports are important also.

We had a total of 8 stations who didn't submit a log show up 5-20 times in the 76 logs we received and cross-checked. Hopefully they and many others will be back next month AND submit a log. Remember submitting a log doubles the strength of your statement that you support CW operation.

We welcome these hams who submitted a sprint log for the first time. We hope they will continue to participate and report their results:
KO7X, WA1BXY, N8RQJ, W5ODS, KC8LTL, N0AZN, WW5G, KE7YTE, K0NWT, VE3AKV

Full sprint info here.

3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS:

- We are just winding down a VERY successful membership drive. The efforts by Paul KD2MX and Dave VA3RJ have resulted in around 350 new members in the past week with applications continuing to trickle in. It was a ton of work for me (K3WWP) to process all those applications but a delight to see how our club continues to grow. I may yet see my goal of 5,000 members by the end of 2010 become a reality. Wouldn't that be great!

- In addition to the membership drive, we've also had recommendations by other members bringing in many new members recently. Remember there is a Simple Wire Antenna book (donated by K3WWP) as a prize to the member who recruits the most new members for the club between January 1 and June 30 this year. Be sure to tell your recruit to list you as the Source when they fill out the application form. That is the only way we count votes to determine the winner.

- We are considering another change in our sprints in addition to the First-Timer certificate we started in January. While I am opposed to it, several members feel we should give in to the digital mode bullies and move our 40M sprint frequencies down the band. I feel if we give in to the bullies, it will just keep forcing us to keep moving further down the band till we run out of room altogether. Kind of like the schoolyard bully who controls all the kids in the schoolyard. So having said that, we are going to not really move, but just expand our frequency range on 40M to 7030-7045. We have enough participants now that we can fill up that range quite nicely. So it's up to you where you want to operate in that range.

- Just a quick reminder we're continuing with the hidden call sign idea suggested by Bill KB3XS. Somewhere in this newsletter is a call sign of a member in a place that is definitely out of context and containing a mix of upper and lower case letters. If it is YOUR call sign and YOU find it, email us BEFORE the publication date of the next newsletter (March 13) and win 100 NAQCC QSL cards donated by the NAQCC.

- Here's an update on the standings in the competition for the prize of an anonymously donated Vibroplex bug. To win the bug, you earn points for participating in club events. Details are on the prize page in the home section of the web site. As of February 15, the points are as follows:

N8XMS - 17
K3WWP (ineligible) - 12
NU7T - 10
VE3FUJ - 8
VE3HUR - 7
WY7N - 6

Looks like Paul just about has the competition sewed up, but a surge of points down the stretch might alter that.

3a. WEB SITE TOUR: We're continuing our tour this newsletter with a look at the Awards section of the web site.

Every time we accomplish something in life, it is wonderful to have that accomplishment acknowledged in some way, whether it be a pat on the back, a word of congratulation, a certificate, a trophy, and so on. As I write this, the Vancouver Winter Olympics are taking place with the awarding of Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals for excellence in winter sports such as skiing and ice skating, among others. Accomplishments for excellence in ham radio should be honored in some way as well. That's what our NAQCC Awards program is all about, and this

section of the web site is here for that purpose.

The Awards section lists all of our many awards, telling how you can qualify for them, and how to apply for the handsome certificates or in some cases, prizes that go with them. Rather than list and describe them here in the newsletter which would be re-inventing the wheel, we invite you to simply explore the Awards section. Then pick out a couple awards and challenge yourself to earn them. It will give you a great deal of satisfaction to do so, and you'll get that certificate or prize to 'show off' to your ham friends. Might as well take pride in your accomplishments. Nothing wrong with that.

For more info visit the Awards section of the web site.

4. ELMER PROJECT: Report from N3IJR:

The NAQCC QRS Net meets Sunday evening at 8:30 Eastern time which is Monday at 0130Z on 3575 kHz. Please check in and help out. Everyone is welcome from the rank beginner to the seasoned veteran CW op.

We need YOU to make our Elmer project work. If you need help with any ham radio matter or are willing to help others with your expertise, please contact our Elmer directors:
K5DUZ - **NAQCCSKED@FLASH.NET**
N3IJR - pix, email, n3ijr (1K)
WY3H - **TJMITCHELLKX3@COMCAST.NET**

Also see Elmer Project on the web site.

5. AWARD WINNERS THE PAST TWO MONTHS:

CERTIFICATES:
1000 MPW:
0069 - N8XMS
0070 - VE3FUJ
0071 - G5CL

2XQRP:
0009 - N8XMS (250 pts)
0010 - AA4W (250 pts)
0005 - N8XMS (500 pts)

DXCC:
0005 - AA4W
0006 - G5CL

Friendship Club:
0007 - K3RLL (ex-WA3ZBJ)

Participation Award:
East - K3WWP, N8XMS, W2JEK
West - WY7N
VE/DX - VE3HUR
FISTS membership/renewal - W2JEK

QSO-a-Day:
Full year - K3WWP
4 months - G5CL

Suffix Words:
0004 - N9AKF

WAC:
0012 - AA4W
0013 - G5CL

ENDORSEMENTS and/or WEB SITE LISTINGS:
2XQRP Listing:
0012 - N8XMS (50 pts)
0013 - AA4W (50 pts)
0010 - N8XMS (100 pts)
0011 - AA4W (100 pts)

Alphabet Prefix Honor Roll:
NU7T - 201 - World
G5CL - 200 - World
NU7T - 120 - USA

Suffix Words Honor Roll:
N8XMS - 100 - SWA

WAC Endorsements:
G5CL - 20M, 17M

Full List of all award winners here.

6. MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: This section is managed by Paul N8XMS and any questions about it should go to PAUL142857@GMAIL.COM. Paul selects members at random and asks them if they would like to be featured in the Member Spotlight in the newsletter.

Eric Bowser KB3BFQ #2345

My name is Eric Bowser (KB3BFQ) 32 years old, married for 6 years (wife's name is Kristin) with two children (Perry 3, Jocelynn 9 months) and live just outside of downtown Pittsburgh, PA in a town called Forest Hills (15221). Like many of my fellow operators, there is an unique and exciting tale to my story becoming a ham radio operator and one in which if you've been in contact with John, K3WWP or visited his website, it is in much more detail.

It was during the Blizzard of '93 (March 1993) that I was stuck with over a foot of snow, no school, and all my friends at home so I ventured over to John's house to chat, play some computer games and ask him what some of that equipment he had in his house was for. It isn't often that a youngster like me would be afforded the most fortunate of placement living next to a ham radio operator who loves kids and so helpful. I believe it took a while (1994) for me to get my license because I was still playing sports and other things teenagers are apt to do.

I did ok operating CW/QRP-only through 1998 taking part in most Novice contests and even doing what I could for CW and QRP contests against the big operators using their skyscrapers for antennas, top of the line equipment and the power fitting for 3-Mile Island. I like to keep it simple using QRP Plus, homebrew tuner, homebrew paddle, 5W, and random wire. Simplicity is sorta required living in a close knit suburb like Forest Hills.

Most memorable QSO other than the first one with K3WWP had to be working a station in France and Argentina, if memory serves it was the same weekend. Still need to get a few states for W.A.S. award, yes I need the usual Hawaii, Alaska, and 2 or 3 others that escape me right now.

Last year, I tried to get back in the hobby but with a young son, baby on the way and work taking too many hours to allow myself time to devote to hobby, it just hasn't worked out. Though I haven't been able to enjoy Ham Radio over the last few years, it is a goal of mine to be able get back in QRP/CW only hamming in 2010 for various contests with NAQCC and other fine CW/QRP organizations.

73s
Eric Bowser, KB3BFQ
NAQCC #2345

7. NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES BY OUR MEMBERS: This section is a forum for you to tell other members what you've been up to on the ham bands or to submit an article dealing with some aspect of CW and QRP operation or equipment. Send your news items and articles to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**. Deadline for submitting news items for the next newsletter is Mar 11. For your convenience any links in this section will open in a new browser window so you can come immediately back here to the newsletter just by closing that extra window.

DISCLAIMER: Any views expressed in this section are those of the member submitting them, and may or may not be those of the NAQCC or its officers.

- **From John K3WWP #0002 -** Whew, what a busy time for the NAQCC and me. Nearly 400 new members to process. Many new awards. Shattered records for our sprints. And on and on. All this from a club whose founders (WY3H and K3WWP) thought might garner a small membership of 50 or so. After I typed this Tom claimed he predicted around 100, but I think that's just due to inflation. HI. Anyway, don't ever bet on any predictions those two make. Just yesterday I processed 50 applications after the club already has 4300+ members. It just goes to show that if you build a better mousetrap, folks will beat a path to your door. For the NAQCC, that path is now a very deep rut from all the traffic. And I just have to keep saying this (hope you don't get tired of hearing it) - it is all the more remarkable when you consider we have a bc017 smaller base to draw from than other larger (and smaller) clubs. Not everyone operates CW, and those that do, may never operate QRP. That eliminates a large number of hams who may qualify for other clubs, but not ours.

Although I was too busy processing applications from our membership drive, I did manage to put in some time in the ARRL DX Test. It was nice to have 15M in great shape. I was working deep into EU easier than I have in quite a while now. UR, YL, UA1, YL, E7, OH and the like showed up several times in my brief log. Thought I had a new overall country once when I worked TX4T, but I already had French Polynesia although this was on 15M for a new band-country and prefix anyway. As usual KH6 was easy to work. I'm always amazed how easy I can work Hawaii, even if their KW sigs are somewhat weak here. I had a lot of fun. Wish I'd had more time. Probably could have gotten 300-400 QSO's instead of the 92 I did get. 40M was good to EU late in the contest. Never did try 80M. Didn't hear anything on 10M the couple times I checked. Still you can tell sunspot cycle 24 is kicking into gear now. Wait till next year. We won't have a membership drive near any big DX contests. HI.

- **From Bruce WY7N #1127 -** My life is hectic. I didn't know if I would be able to participate in the January sprint until just before it started. I didn't sit down at the station until 01:25Z. As is typical for me, my setup was partially dismantled. I'll give some background.

A few months back I decided to give SO2R a try in a few contests. To feed both radios to my headphones I *borrowed* a small audio mixer from my stash of recording equipment and hooked it up to my transceivers. Here are pictures of me and the unit:

I learned that proficient CW SO2R operation will require a *lot* of practice, experience and station tweaking. On the other hand, I discovered that use of an audio mixer to feed headphones is a great tool for all types of operation. For SO2R operation, a mixer allows placement of sound from either radio anywhere in the stereo field. E.g. the radio on the right to the right; the one on the left to the left. In practice, I found I prefer to move the exact placement around from time to time. It seems to reduce fatigue.

It ends up that my favorite benefit from using the mixer to feed my headphones was the use of the EQ and level controls. When recording, I almost never touch the EQ. If I do, it's a very tiny adjustment. For ham use, anything goes. Aggressive adjustments yield dramatic improvements. Most of all, the additional dynamic range and fine adjustment of the level controls on the mixer, in conjunction with the AF and RF gain controls on the transceiver, allow minute adjustment of the audio to maximize the signal to noise ratio of the particular signal of interest. In doing this, I noticed that the best setting combination of all these controls is situational. As conditions change, so do the settings.

So when I sat down at the station at 01:25Z, I remembered that I had *borrowed* the mixer *back* to do some recording. I was already a little late and I still had to set up my laptop, etc. I decided it was better to put up with non-optimal audio than to miss operating time. (You can't catch fish if your hook isn't in the water). I plugged my headphones directly into the rig and tuned up.

A quick listen to 20M revealed no signals. There were plenty on 40M. In fact, I had a hard time finding an open place to call CQ so I started on there. To my surprise, there was a reply to my very first CQ. His signal was buried in the noise. I could barely discern it. All I copied was K9 something. After a lot of requests for repeats, tweaks of the AF/RF gain controls (I sure missed that mixer!), trying various filter combinations, etc., I finally dropped in my narrowest filter and minutely tweaked the RIT and worked K9OSC. Perhaps the atmospheric noise level is higher today than usual.

Whew! That was a *lot* of work! Operators with super ears like John, K3WWP, do this in their head! I rely on all those knobs. I found it odd that K9OSC sent 579 for my report (I sent 559, but it was really 229!). My signal must have been better there than his was here. I didn't have time to rest. After sending 'TU dit dit' I had two stations calling. Both were down in the noise, same as Bob. It took an embarrassing number of repeats to finally work KE9DR.

'TU dit dit' and there was another station down in the mud, a '5' this time. It ended up being KD5KJ. Everyone listening probably thinks I'm a LID. I can't copy anything. I was surprised again to receive a 569. Propagation is weird tonight, I thought.

TU dit dit NA WY7N and there were multiple stations calling me again. I can't believe it, I have a pileup in a QRP sprint! Those new sunspots must be doing their job. I didn't have any dead time until about 03:10Z, so I figured it was time to switch to 80M. A couple more stations and I will double my record number of QSOs. 80M seemed to have less noise than 40M. It was easier copy. Three new QSOs came without needing to ask for excessive repeats.

At this point I was feeling a bit smug. This is my best effort ever. Surely this will be good enough to win first place in the mountain time zone. At 03:24Z, NU7T answered my CQ. (I'm always very pleased to work Steve. He is my neighbor, in Reno. When I first started participating in these sprints, often his would be the only station I would work.) I noticed his signal was easier to copy than it has been in recent sprints.

I don't know what it was about Steve's clean signal, but it caused something to 'click' in my mind. I was laughing out loud while I finished copying his exchange. At this point, my wife walked up to tell me it was time to have family prayer and put the kids to bed. She asked what was so funny. I didn't think she would understand, but I explained that I had just achieved my highest score ever in a NAQCC sprint. The problem is, I was supposed to be running 5 watts. Instead, I had accidentally set my output power to 50!!!! OH NO!!!! It was all for naught! She gave me a quizzical look, then we put the kids to bed.

Oh well. There is always next month. I'll try again. You can bet I will pay special attention to the range setting on my power meter.

- **From Damon W4HDM #3633 -** It is with great sadness I announce the passing of Ralph E. (Ty) Tyrrel, W1TF (NAQCC #298) of Statham, Georgia. Ty was born on September 14, 1930 and passed away on Thursday, August 6, 2009. He was licensed since 1948 and held the calls: W1TFS, W9NCF, W5INJ, OX5BT. He was an ARRL Diamond club member and Life Member for over 50 years. He also belonged to the Barrow Amateur Radio Emergency Services Club (WR4BC), NAQCC #0298, and SKCC #4973T

- **From Larry N6NZE #2830 -** After a 6.5 earthquake in Eureka CA, the power lines went QRT. I decided, that in the event of another power failure, that this was an alternative to a gasoline fed generator.

This is the electricity backup that I have now for my station:

1. Keep the double cycle trickle charged on a smart charger.
2. When the power lines go down connect up the DC to AC inverter.
3. Plug in my gear and I'm on the air, Edison, PG&E or not! I operated for a full hour on an Emcomm traffic net with this.

- **From Dave NF0R #3847 -** The St. Louis QRP Society wishes to announce that its monthly meetings take place on the third Wednesday of every month. Members begin gathering around 7:00 p.m. in the Engineering Building of the St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley. The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m in room E143.

SLQS has met on the third Wednesday of every month since organizing in 1987. Following tradition our members are drawn from St. Louis, Missouri and vicinity. We are focused on radio with emphasis on QRP and homebrew. Our Peanut Whistle newsletter has been published monthly since the club's inception. SLQS schedules several annual events including a Builders Contest, Key Night, Field Day, Tailgate Sale and our Christmas Dinner meeting.

Please join us for a meeting if you are in the area. Guests are always welcome. You certainly don't need an invitation to attend. Questions about SLQS, or for directions contact: dgauding@sbcglobal.net or go to: www.slqs.net.

- **From Tom VE3UKU #1212 -** I was recently reading the K9YA online newsletter and there was an interesting article about a ham who just got his license and made his first CW contact. The article mentioned what a thrill it was for this ham to get a QSL card back from the other station.

I thought about that and decided to go through my old log books and look up my first CW QSO, contact the ham, and ask for his QSL card. My plan was to frame it and hang it up in my shack. So I sent off a letter and here is the reply: "Good to hear from you. Yes, my log book notes a QSO with you on 7.061 at 18:55 GMT on 7 Jan 2009 and I am happy to be your first cw contact. I sure remember my first QSO away back in '67. I was WA9UET my first QSO was with WA9UEV in Wisconsin on 7.060 cw. I have been 100% cw since then having never owned a mike! The odd thing about the first QSO was that we were back to back in the old call book as there was no WA9UEU!!! I was using a Johnson Ranger and a Hammarlund HQ-180A [and still have both of them]. I will send you a QSL."

- **From Lee WB2YAF #297 -** I would like to tell the members of NAQCC about the K3UK Fists/QRP Sked Page at www.obriensweb.com/sked/. I know many are against skeds but I think this is a good place to hang out, meet people and set frequencies for contacts. At QRP power, I think the help can be valuable. I've been logged on there a lot. I mention the NAQCC and the Sunday net every chance I get and I've gotten a few other hams interested in the NAQCC.

- **From Dan W9MFG #2896 -** It is probably fair to say that ever since the FCC dropped the Morse code requirement for an amateur radio license, it has been up to groups like the NAQCC to keep CW alive. Without our efforts, the code will die as surely as a flower in an early frost. Put another way, if we don't step up to the plate, who will? Much of this came to mind following a recent conversation with a fellow ham working at a well known parts and equipment store. I had called, asking about some new gear in which I was interested. I asked this chap if he worked CW. "Not lately," he said, "not after an experience I had on 40 meters some years ago."

He went on to explain that he, then a recent arrival to ham radio, was trying to have a QSO with someone who was obviously an old timer. The CW was a little to fast for his copying skill and he asked the oldster to QRS. The request was rebuffed and he was told, in so many

words, to practice on his own; I don't have time to slow down. Such an attitude on the part of anyone is not good for ham radio. While we all have differing skills at reading CW, we do the hobby dishonor when we don't help a fellow ham. Who among us can not point to someone (an elmer) who went out of their way to assist us in the early days of our interest in the hobby? Perhaps the message here is to be sensitive to friends who may have some trouble copying and do what we can to encourage them to higher levels of accomplishment. I believe we can all agree to help maintain enough interest in the Morse code so that it will continue to live for many years. Let us be crusaders of whom Samuel F.B Morse would be proud.

- **From Paul N8XMS #675 -** I have had very little actual on-air time over the past couple of months because most of my free time has been spent building my Elecraft K2 Christmas/Birthday gift. It's been a lot of fun and I've encountered no problems so far. The picture shows the exciting results of the first power-on test. I'm taking my time with the build and still have a long way to go. At one point I was stalled while I had to wait for the delivery of some missing parts from Elecraft. So one morning I was tuning around on 15 meters and managed to work 5E50SA in Agadir, Morocco with my K1 running 4 watts into an old Cushcraft R7 vertical! That was a "new one" for me and very exciting. 5E50SA is a special event station commemorating the Feb 29, 1960 earthquake that killed an estimated 15,000 people. They have a very interesting web site that includes some old video taken of the devastation left by the earthquake.

- **From John KM6NN #2879 -** QRP is alive and well here in Tennessee. After a bout of cold weather and some minor medical issues, we could not wait for a sunny day to go out and get on the air. As it happened, by the grace of the radio gods, we chose a great weekend as the ARRL International DX CW contest was in full swing. We had great hopes of making some DX contacts as we set up on Saturday morning. We met at around 9 AM at our local club office (Donut Delight). The weather was working for us, with no clouds in the sky, so we set off to our operating site.

The sun was shining at our site but we had a slight breeze blowing so we circled the vehicles as a wind break. Lewis KF4WK #700, Doc NV4T #3805, Richard KJ4MXI, Rob N4PJX and myself went to work putting up the W5GI Mystery Antenna and setting up Lewis' K-3. In no time at all everything was ready and Doc was searching the 20 meter band. There were signals everywhere and we quickly put KH7B in the log. That was with just 5 watts and I thought that was really cool.

Then we went on to work Sweden, Finland and Bosnia/Herzegovina. What a great day for QRP radio! I now see that we need to time our QRP outings to match the contest calendar. We took turns working the K3 and were able to make more DX contacts in just a couple of hours than we ever did in all of our outings. What a great day! With the good weather just around the

corner, I see more QRP fun coming soon.

Club email address - **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless you specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Past on-line newsletters beginning with issue #042 are now archived on the site. So if you missed seeing any past issues, you can check them out in the archives.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.